



DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
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TESTIMONY
ON
SB 524, SD 2 - MAKING A GRANT TO THE HAWAII COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

April 9, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Luke
Chair
The Honorable Scott Y. Nishimoto
Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Finance

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui, SUPPORTS SB 524, SD 2 - Making Appropriations to the Hawaii County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney. SB 524, SD 2 appropriates funds to the Hawaii County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for the career criminal prosecution unit and victim witness assistance program.

State law mandates that certain qualifying defendants be prosecuted under the Career Criminal Prosecution (CCP) program (HRS Chapter 845). State law also mandates to the counties that crime victims and witnesses in criminal cases are afforded certain rights and must be provided with specified services (HRS Chapter 801D). In order to avoid the unfunded mandate prohibition provided by the Hawaii State Constitution, it was the practice for the State to provide funding for these services. This bill will provide the necessary funding required for these programs that are required by state law.

Accordingly, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui, SUPPORTS the passage of this bill. We ask that the committee PASS SB 524, SD 2.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

Justin F. Kollar
Prosecuting Attorney

Kevin K. Takata
First Deputy



Rebecca A. Vogt
Second Deputy

Diana Gausepohl-White
Victim/Witness Program Director

OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

County of Kaua'i, State of Hawai'i

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TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB524 – MAKING A GRANT TO THE HAWAII COUNTY OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.

Justin F. Kollar, Prosecuting Attorney
County of Kaua'i

House Committee on Finance
April 9, 2015, 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 308

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

The County of Kaua'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** SB524 – Making a Grant to the Hawai'i County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney.

In supporting these Appropriations, we note that the Career Criminal Prosecution Unit¹ and Victim Witness Assistance Program² are vital, state-mandated programs that address the most serious career criminals and provide direct services to victims of crime.

¹ Career Criminal Prosecution programs were established in 1979 by HRS Section 845-2, which provides that:

“There shall be established a career criminal prosecution program, whose purpose shall be the investigation and prosecution of those persons identified as habitual or career criminals....The office of the attorney general shall administer the program, and develop a plan of financial and technical assistance for prosecuting attorneys' offices.” (emphasis added).

² Victim Witness Assistance programs were established in 1986 by HRS Section 28-111, which provides that:

“There is established a victim-witness assistance program in the department of the attorney general, whose purpose shall be to provide information, assistance, and support services to the victims of and witnesses to crimes committed in the State.... The attorney general shall allocate and award appropriated funds to counties whose victim-witness assistance units are in substantial compliance with the policies and criteria established.” (emphasis added).

Historically, the funding for these programs has been provided by the Department of the Attorney General to all four Counties for the statewide efforts to maintain vital and effective CCP and VWA programs. Although funding has somewhat lessened in recent years, these programs have always been regarded as bulwarks of the criminal justice system in Hawai'i.

These funds go directly to pay the salaries of the highly-skilled and experienced Deputy Prosecutors and Victim/Witness Advocates who are our on-the-ground, frontline resources in seeking justice in our community. Without these funds, the possibility of reductions-in-force of these public safety and law enforcement professionals is very real.

Accordingly, we are in STRONG SUPPORT of SB524. We request that your Committee PASS these Appropriations.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on these Appropriations.

MITCHELL D. ROTH
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

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OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 524, SD2

A BILL FOR AN ACT MAKING A GRANT TO THE HAWAII
COUNTY OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Reb. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

Thursday, April 9, 2015, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Honorable Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee on Finance, the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai'i submits the following testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 524, SD2.

This measure appropriates funds as a grant-in-aid to the county of Hawai'i Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for the Career Criminal Prosecution Unit (CCP) and Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP).

The CCP program was created because a disproportionate amount of serious crimes are committed against the public by a relatively small number of multiple and repeat-felony offenders, commonly known as "career criminals." Money spent on this unit is an efficient use of resources, in terms of providing citizens with swift and effective justice, and by reducing heavy caseloads and long court delays.

Since 1983, the Legislature has provided support for the VWAP, and in 1986, the Legislature established the VWAP on a statewide basis. The statute established the program in the Department of the Attorney General, with the purpose of providing information, assistance, funding, and support services to the victims and witnesses of crimes committed in Hawai'i.

State law mandates that certain qualifying defendants be prosecuted under the CCP program (HRS Chapter 845). State law also mandates to the counties that crime victims and witnesses in criminal cases are afforded certain rights and must be provided with specific services (HRS Chapter 801D). In order to avoid the unfunded mandate prohibition provided by the Hawai'i State Constitution, it was the practice for the State to provide funding for these services.

This bill will provide funding as follows:

	CCP	VWAP
Fiscal Year 2015-2016:	\$87,631.00	\$59,956.00
Fiscal Year 2016-2017:	<u>\$99,487.00</u>	<u>\$76,183.00</u>
Total:	\$187,118.00	\$136,139.00

Although the funding will allow us to plan and prioritize for the next two fiscal years, if the Legislation is not inclined to fund these programs for both fiscal years, we ask that funds are at least appropriated for FY 2015-2016.

The Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai‘i supports the passage of Senate Bill No. 524, SD2 which will provide the funding needed to maximize our service to our community in the fields of Career Criminal and Victim Witness Assistance. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
**CRIME VICTIM COMPENSATION
COMMISSION**

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Commissioner

PAMELA FERGUSON-BREY
Executive Director

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 524, SD2
RELATING TO MAKING A GRANT TO THE HAWAII COUNTY OFFICE OF THE
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

by

Pamela Ferguson-Brey, Executive Director
Crime Victim Compensation Commission

House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

Thursday, April 9, 2015; 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for providing the Crime Victim Compensation Commission (the "Commission") with the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 524, SD2. Senate Bill 524, SD2, appropriates funds for grants-in-aid to the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Hawaii for the career criminal prosecution unit and for the victim witness assistance program.

The Commission was established in 1967 to mitigate the suffering and financial impact experienced by victims of violent crime by providing compensation to pay un-reimbursed crime-related expenses. Many victims of violent crime could not afford to pay their medical bills, receive needed mental health or rehabilitative services, or bury a loved one if compensation were not available from the Commission.

The Commission estimates that over eighty percent (80%) of the violent crime victims who apply for compensation are referred through the county victim witness assistance programs. The county victim witness assistance programs play an important role in mitigating the emotional and financial suffering experienced by victims through their referrals to the Commission and to other social service agencies. The county victim witness assistance programs also support and guide victims through the criminal justice process, helping to ensure that offenders can be successfully prosecuted.

Many victims and surviving family members, particularly victims and survivors of violent crimes like murder and sexual assault, would not be able to make it through the criminal justice process without the support and guidance of a victim witness advocate. Victim witness advocates notify crime victims of hearing dates and major developments in their case, accompany victims and survivors to court where necessary, and help victims and survivors with victim impact statements to enable them to exercise their right to be heard at sentencing. This is all in addition to informing victims and survivors about the social services and financial assistance available to them as crime victims.

The county victim witness assistance programs need sufficient funding for staff in order to continue to provide these important services. The Commission urges you to support the appropriation of grants-in-aid to the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Hawaii for the victim witness assistance program. Thank you for providing the Commission with the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 524, SD2.

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**THE HONORABLE SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2015
State of Hawai'i**

April 9, 2015

**RE: S.B. 524, S.D. 2; MAKING A GRANT TO THE HAWAII COUNTY OFFICE OF
THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.**

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and members of the House Committee on Finance, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") submits the following testimony in strong support of S.B. 524, S.D. 2.

Pursuant to legislation passed in 1979, and codified as sections 845-1, 845-2, and 845-3, Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("HRS"), the Career Criminal Prosecution program was created because a disproportionate amount of serious crimes are committed against the public by a relatively small number of multiple- and repeat-felony offenders, commonly known as "career criminals." In response, the State created the Career Criminal Prosecution Unit, which it has funded annually. Money spent on this unit is an efficient use of resources, in terms of providing citizens with swift and effective justice, and reducing heavy caseloads and long court delays. With your support, these deputy prosecuting attorneys will have the tools necessary to protect the public from career criminals.

Since 1983, the Legislature has also provided support for the Victim Witness Assistance Program. In 1986, the Legislature enacted section 28-111, Hawaii revised Statutes, which established the Victim Witness Assistance program on a statewide basis. The statute established the program in the Department of the Attorney General, with the purpose of providing information, assistance, funding, and support services to the victims and witnesses of crimes committed in Hawaii.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Honolulu Prosecuting Attorney strongly supports the passage of S.B. 524, S.D. 2, which will provide the funding needed to maximize service to the community in the fields of Career Criminal and Victim Witness Assistance. Also, as the legislative session progresses, we kindly request that the funding requested in this bill be inserted into the State Budget, along with similarly necessary funding for each county. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.